

***AMSE Annual Conference***

***Zagreb, June 4-6 2009***

**European standards for a PhD in medicine**

**Position paper from ORPHEUS2009**

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## **Why is there a need for standards?**

**PhD is an international degree**

- **does it have the same meaning in all countries?**

**Governments are promoting the PhD at huge cost**

- **what do they get for their money?**

**Mobility**

- **how can applicants be compared, if the PhD has different standards?**

**Opportunity to learn from each other**

The **orpheus** position paper

**Towards Standards for  
PhD Education in  
Biomedicine and Health  
Sciences**

orpheus

Organisation for PhD Education in Biomedicine  
and Health Sciences in the European System.

orpheus



**prepared during ORPHEUS2009  
Fourth European Conference  
23-25 April 2009  
Aarhus University**

Towards Standards for PhD Education  
in Biomedicine and Health Sciences:  
**A position paper from ORPHEUS**

PREPARED DURING ORPHEUS 2009:  
Fourth European Conference  
23-25 April 2009  
held at Aarhus University, Denmark

# The position paper



## **Basis:**

- **previous ORPHEUS documents**
- **72 faculties, 33 countries were involved**
- **deans, graduate school heads, students**
- **extensive discussion before, during and after conference**

## **Content:**

- **status**
  - **points of consensus**
  - **recommendations**
  - **standards not standardization!**
- **PhD degree**
  - **Requirements of the PhD programme**
  - **Admission criteria**
  - **Supervision**
  - **Evaluation of theses**

# PhD degree



- the PhD is a **research degree** and has to be based on a productive research environment
- the thesis should normally be based on a review and the **equivalent of three internationally published papers**
- a **clinical PhD should have the same level** as any other PhD in biomedicine and health sciences
- normally written and optimally also defended in **English**
- should not be confused with "**professional doctorates**"

# Requirements of the PhD programme



- **3-4 years of full-time study**
  - **clinical PhD could be 6-8 year 50% part-time**
- **structured with qualified and regular supervision**
- **primarily original research**
- **ca. 6 months of course work including substantial training in transferable skills**
- **quality assurance: programme and student**

## Admission criteria: the applicant



- should be based on a competitive and internationally open process
- normally based on a Master's degree, but flexibility to allow work experience
- admission during a Master's programme is possible
- that the candidate may be expected to complete a PhD satisfactorily: "potential for research"

# Admission criteria: the proposed programme

- **scientific quality of project**
- **quality of supervisors**
- **resources available - infrastructure, running expenses, supervision and salary**



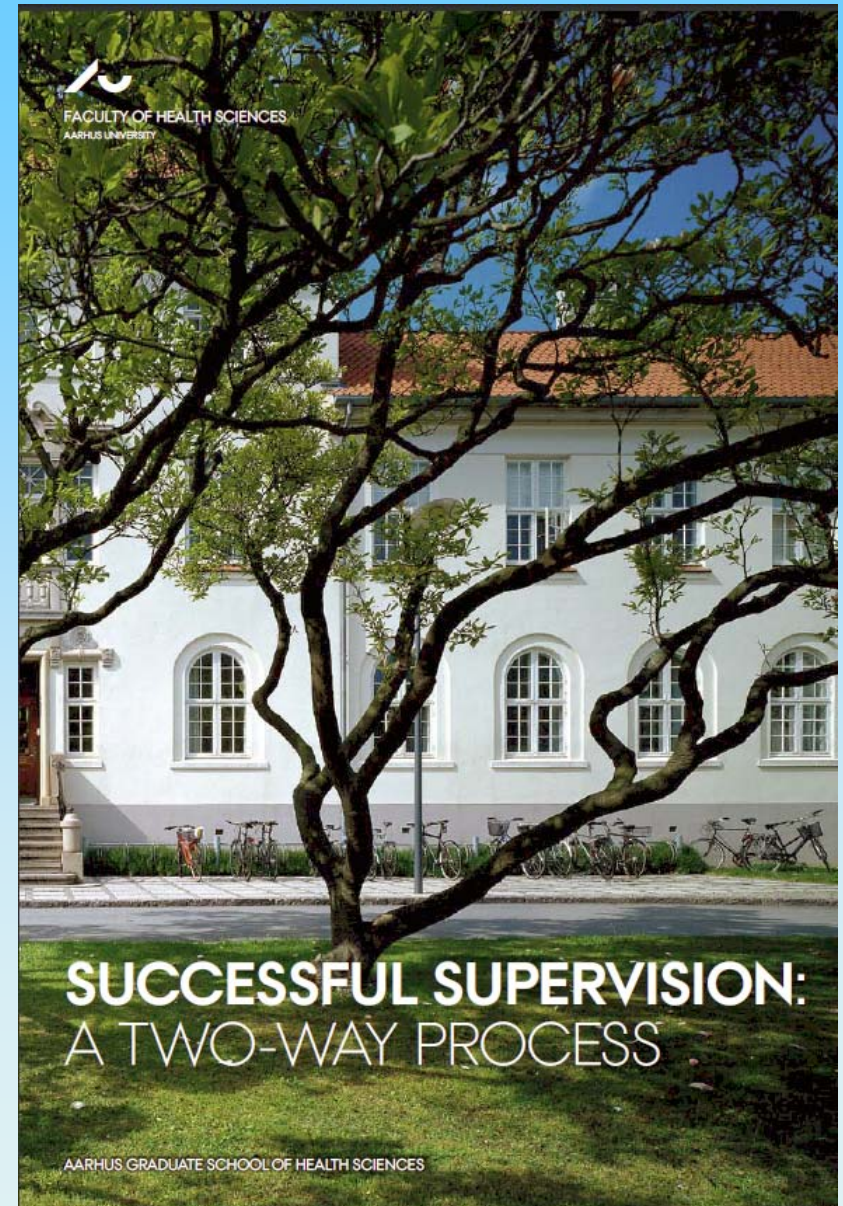
# Supervisor

- **active scholar, international network**
- **formal training increasingly common**
- **limited number of students**
- **at least one co-supervisor**



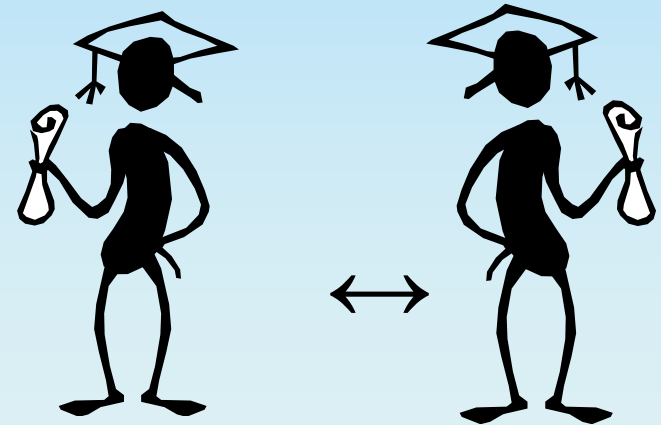
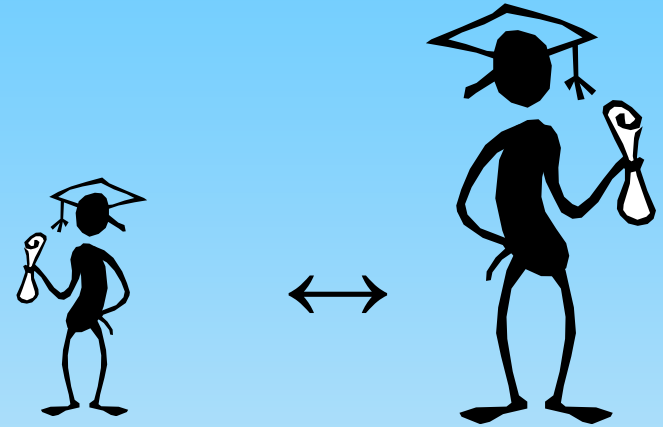
## Student-supervisor relationship

- **key to a successful PhD programme**
- **successful supervision - a two-way process**
- **requires mutual respect and a contribution from both**



## Student-supervisor relationship

- supervisor-student relationship is key to a successful PhD programme
- successful supervision - a two-way process
- requires mutual respect and a contribution from both
- **expectations should be agreed before starting**



# Evaluation of PhD theses



- **independent assessment committees**
- **clear criteria**
- **rapid assessment (3 months)**
- **consequences of negative assessments**

## **Conclusion:** **what can the position paper be used for?**

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- 1. The position paper provides a basis for establishing standards for a PhD in biomedicine and health sciences**
- 2. Remarkable degree of consensus**
- 3. Task now is to engage**
  - AMSE?**
  - other faculties?**
  - EUA-CDE?**
  - legislators?**
- 4. AMSE/WFME/ORPHEUS task force planned**